

This Meeting Summary, prepared by the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, documents the questions and comments that were asked at the meeting. For many of the questions asked there was not an opportunity for a response. Staff responses to questions and comments have been included to provide clarification on many of the issues raised at the meeting. The questions and comments are organized by topic.

The Project Advisory Committee meeting was held at the Laurel Hill Community Association Clubhouse at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting agenda, presentation, and handout can be viewed online under the April 27, 2009 meeting date at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/laurelhill/master_plan.htm.

- Tim Sargeant, Chair of the Laurel Hill Project Advisory Committee (PAC), reviewed the meeting agenda, the role of the PAC and format of the meeting, and introduced Department of Planning and Zoning staff.
- Chris Caperton, Laurel Hill Project Coordinator, Department of Planning and Zoning, discussed a strategy that has been developed to find an alternate 90' baseball field near the Adaptive Reuse site, as the Revised Master Plan includes development on the existing field. Staff from DPZ, Schools, and Parks, are working to provide a 90' baseball field on land adjacent to the proposed Middle School site, which is under review as part of a proposed land swap. The exchange will give the Park Authority control of 40 acres to the north of the Secondary and Middle Schools, where land is available for a 90' baseball field. The Middle School design calls for parking adjacent to the Park Authority property for use by park users. Supervisor Gerry Hyland has indicated that he will not support a development plan for the Adaptive Reuse site that does not address finding a new baseball field.
- Brad Elmer and Tom Miller of the Alexander Company presented the Revised Master Plan and Financial information. The presentation and handout can be viewed online at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/laurelhill/master_plan.htm

Questions and Comments from the Public

Baseball Field

1. What is the potential for a lighted field at a new, relocated Ballfield? The Hawks are planning for lights at the adaptive reuse site.
The Park Authority's 2232 Approval (FS-V02-29) for interim uses at Laurel Hill (which includes the approval to use the Reformatory ballfield on an interim basis) states that "there will be no changes involving field lighting or irrigation systems." No plans for lighting the ball field at the Reformatory have been received by the Park Authority.

Citizens are sensitive to the lighting of athletic fields and their potential impact on neighborhoods. Staff is working on an alternate site for a ballfield that would not include lighting. Any proposal to light a ballfield at a later date would require additional public coordination, input, and approval.

2. Information about an alternative field should have been presented to the Hawks.
This information was first presented at a South County Federation public meeting. DPZ staff presentation of the information at the PAC meeting was the first public forum opportunity to repeat this information.
3. Would a new field transition with the existing field or would there be a period of time when no ball field is available?
It is envisioned that any new field would be operational before, or at the time, that construction work at the Reformatory begins.
4. What happens to the investment that has been made by the Hawks at the Reformatory site?
The Adopt-a-Field agreement states that Partners with the Park Authority agree to provide maintenance activities on a year-round basis.
5. A petition to save the field, with 2,000 signatures, has been forwarded to all the Supervisors. How many signatures are needed that say we want the ballfield?
The Board of Supervisors received the petition. Planning activities for the site considered the needs of the future residents of the adaptive reuse site and the entire community, while looking for solutions to meet the need for ball fields in South County.
6. Comment that the only place for recreation is at this site.
The Fairfax County Park Authority owns approximately 1,200 acres of parkland immediately adjacent to the Adaptive Reuse Area that is planned for a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities.
7. Is it too late to go back to the drawing board and include a ballfield? Request for draft plans that included a baseball field use.
The proposed plan includes a community green space and recreation amenity within part of the current ball field area. A dedicated baseball use eliminates townhouses and a retail pad site, precludes playground equipment, landscaping, and other community structures, and promotes a single-user at the expense of activities oriented for the larger adaptive reuse and regional community.
8. Lights and water are a concern for the baseball field; school fields have restrictions.
Regarding lights please see response #1. The park site adjacent to the new middle school site has a water line traversing the property.
9. History of ballfield and comment that the Senators built the field.

- Research of the National Register period of historic significance 1910 – 1961, provides no information related to the Senators or a sole baseball use at the field. The area was considered a general recreation field and records show numerous softball fields and a football field on site and indicate activities such as picnics, concerts, and track events.
10. Comment that the revised master plan has been responsive and that Supervisor Hyland has stated a commitment that he will not support a plan that does not include addressing the baseball use.
11. How much does it cost to build a 90' field?
Costs depend on amenities provided for the field. The Park Authority has estimated approximately one million dollars for a lighted, irrigated, synthetic turf baseball field. Staff is exploring providing a baseball field replacement in kind to what exists today, without turf and without lights, so it is anticipated that the cost would be less.

Additional Comments regarding the baseball field:

12. Comment noting the lack of 90' fields in the county
13. The area has a nice bike trail, the Workhouse Arts Center, how could the ballfield make or break this deal?
14. Remove 11 homes and leave the field with 325/350/375 dimensions
15. Need to focus on preserving the buildings on the site, not just the ballfield.
16. Comment that the solution is not a yes-no answer; it is gray; and a field off-site could work
17. Comment that we moved here because we wanted to take advantage of the redevelopment of the site. A viable solution is to move the ballfield use off of the property. I wouldn't want a townhouse facing a ballfield; county should provide an off-site ballfield.
18. The important thing is the kids playing on the field and the investment in kids
19. South County Hawks are willing to listen. South County is in need of fields for baseball, football, need more sports facilities for kids and adults

Master Planning Process

20. Comment that the process has not been open and transparent for the South County Hawks and that no one has worked with the baseball community during this process. Conversations with the South County Hawks about the master planning effort began in March 2007, with follow-up emails describing the planning process in March and July, 2007. Supporters of the South County Hawks baseball program attended the PAC meetings in 2008, and in December 2008, county staff made a presentation to the Fairfax Baseball Council, attended by a representative of the South County Hawks.

Since early summer of 2008, 17 meetings have been held with the community, including MOA signatories and county boards such as the ARB.

21. Suggestion to have an alternate analysis done that includes keeping the ballfield so that quality of life in the area doesn't decrease. Need to have two alternate plans that the Board of Supervisors can choose from.

The product of the Master Planning process, per the Request for Proposal, is one master plan that is financially viable. Keeping a ballfield on site has been evaluated and the revised master plan does not recommend including a ballfield on site for both planning and financial reasons. Staff is working on finding an alternate baseball field to avoid disruption for the baseball community if this master plan moves forward.

22. Has the Alexander Company been hired as the developer?

No. The Board of Supervisors determines the developer for the site. The Alexander Company responded to a Request for Proposal asking for a developer to prepare a site Master Plan with the county option to retain the selected firm for development of the property. The RFP asked for both Master Planning and development qualifications. Upon completion of the Master Plan, the county can choose to negotiate a development agreement with The Alexander Company, without advertising a new RFP. The county also retains an option to select another developer if an agreement with The Alexander Company is not desired or reached. The county could also choose to advertise a new RFP.

23. Comment that the presentation characterized meetings with elected officials as their endorsement of the plan

Elected officials – Chairman Sharon Bulova, Supervisor Gerry Hyland, and Supervisor Pat Herrity – were briefed on the master plan prior to the April 27th PAC meeting. The Board of Supervisors appointed the PAC to oversee the planning process and to make recommendations to the Board. The PAC will not make recommendations to the Board until the end of the outreach process. At that point the Board may take a position on the Master Plan.

Residential Use

24. Question about townhomes shown in areas with steep topography.

Some housing may be placed near the crest of the hill along the present patrol road. Site sensitivities include forested areas, resource protection areas (RPA), and soil conditions.

25. Comment that there is too much high density housing for the site. Comment to include fewer townhomes on the site

Each of the previous Task Force efforts, beginning in 2002, proposed a housing element as part of the adaptive reuse of the former prison buildings. Lessening the financial burden to county taxpayers, while meeting the historic preservation

- requirements, requires a revenue generating component of the development. The high infrastructure costs and the high cost of adaptive reuse lead to the recommendation for new residential construction at the site. Another reason for the increased density is the need to protect and adaptively reuse the historic buildings. The 2004 Task Force recommended retail uses in some of the historic buildings. This is not feasible, therefore, another use must be found for these buildings. The best use of the historic buildings are apartments.
26. Suggestion to put a farmers market on the site where some of the proposed new homes are located.
Community use of the proposed central green area could include uses such as a farmer's market.
27. Need to reduce number of townhomes because of school impacts. Schools are overcrowded and this development would ruin the community.
Fairfax County Public Schools staff is evaluating the revised master plan and will provide anticipated student generation information as well as the projected enrollments and capacities at the area schools.
28. How can housing be constructed in the current economic market?
Constructed townhomes for this development are not expected for 3+ years. It is assumed that the market will improve and that this area will remain desirable for residential, retail, and commercial uses.
29. Can we swap some other Laurel Hill property (Furnace Road/Hooes Road parcel mentioned) and build townhomes there?
Any proposal to sell land elsewhere in Laurel Hill for residential development would be subject to review by the General Services Administration and would most likely result in a requirement of payment to the federal government for the fair market value of the property. The majority of the property transferred to the county was transferred at a low cost due to restrictions to retain the land in public ownership and for public park use.
30. Are the apartments going to include children? Can you change the footprints of the townhomes to try to attract fewer families with children (include first floor bedrooms)? Continue the age-restricted idea.
Footprints such as those that include a first floor bedroom can be considered during the design phase of the project.

Vehicular Circulation, Traffic and Transportation

31. How many traffic lights are proposed?

Two traffic lights would be needed; one at the intersection of White Spruce Way and Silverbrook Road, and one at the intersection of Silverbrook Road and the proposed new access point into the site south of White Spruce Way.

32. Traffic is already an issue in the area. What are the details about the traffic analysis?

What are the impacts – Hooes Road and Silverbrook Road already have significant backups

Wells and Associates conducted a preliminary traffic assessment. Their study indicated the need for two new stoplights, and also indicated that the level of service in the area generally would operate at a level of service D, or better.

The preliminary assessment was completed to obtain information regarding potential improvements that may be needed for the development of the site. As part of the development review process if the master plan moves forward, a more detailed traffic analysis will be required and reviewed by both the Virginia Department of Transportation and Fairfax County Department of Transportation.

33. Request for traffic analysis to be posted online

Traffic information has been posted online. The preliminary analysis was used to provide basic information about potential traffic impacts and improvements. A more detailed, formal analysis will be required by the County during the development review process.

34. There doesn't seem to be enough parking shown on the plan.

Parking shown on the master plan is based on county requirements for those uses. Townhouse parking is assumed for the garages in the townhouse. Further analysis is required to ensure adequate surface parking for visitors and handicapped parking.

Historic Preservation, Architecture, and Tax Credits

35. How will the buildings be designed to complement the historic site?

Architectural design elements must follow the guidance of the draft Standards and Guidelines for the site, the direction of the Fairfax County Architectural Review Board, and the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Design. The Master Plan contains no proposed design work for the site. Conceptual drawings are meant to depict scale and relationship, not design elements, materials, or motifs.

36. What percentage of the financials for the project are historic tax credits?

Approximately \$16.6 million is estimated for federal and state historic tax credits. This is approximately 11% of the total project cost of \$148 million.

37. Where is the wall being removed?

Wall removal is proposed along the north, south and east sides of the wall to allow for access and visibility into the site.

38. Comment that revised plan does a better job of preserving the historic viewsheds into the site.

39. Comment that the master plan should include funding to restore the Laurel Hill House and Gardens.

The Master Plan does not include redevelopment of the Laurel Hill House and Gardens. The Gardens are controlled by the Fairfax County Park Authority, and the Laurel Hill House is recommended to be included as part of the surrounding park in the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Project Financing

40. Questions about ROI calculations and fill rates, and general project financing.

Len Wales, County Debt Manager, discussed the county's role in future negotiations with a developer to close the financial gap for the project. The cost of a field may be an even trade in terms of filling a gap to keep it onsite or moving it offsite. The gap is \$8-\$12 million; no developer will bid on a plan that has that sort of gap without knowing what the county will contribute. If density decreases, that means the gap will increase. There are strategies for closing the gap without affecting the taxpayer. Proffers increase the gap that the county has to close. One method to close the gap is TIF financing (Tax Increment Financing). This development could support up to \$9 million (or thereabouts) for capital construction through TIF financing. This development is not a huge moneymaker for the county. The additional tax revenue will support schools, police and fire services.

Land Use

41. Support for restoration of buildings and straight preservation but no new construction.

Just renovate the old buildings and don't put in any new construction.

Renovation of the historic buildings without new construction is not economically achievable. The high cost of adaptive reuse construction – gutting buildings, removing old and installing new utilities, fitting living spaces into odd-shaped buildings and spaces – makes new construction one important component of raising money and making the site viable.

42. We want nothing to be done, keep the site as it is, undeveloped

The county has an obligation, under the deed of transfer, to adaptively reuse the historic buildings. An undeveloped site still requires expensive maintenance and security.

43. The Plan should include a County museum.

There are no plans to place a Fairfax County History Museum on the site. A task force convened to assess possible museum locations has not recommended Laurel Hill for a county museum. A museum depicting the prison-era of the property is planned at the Lorton Arts Foundation Workhouse site.

44. Did you consider a pool or recreation amenities for drawing people to the site?

A proposed recreational amenity consisting of a swimming pool and workout center are planned on the southern portion of the site, east of the Reformatory Quadrangle.

45. Comments and discussion of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations, the Task Force recommendations, and the flexibility to increase the number of residential units or remove more buildings to make the plan more viable. Discussion about impact to historic tax credits if more buildings are removed.

46. What is the size of the central green area?

The central green area is approximately 2 acres.

Other Comments

47. Resident of Laurel Hill bought home hoping the site will be redeveloped.

48. Request for alternate plan showing the baseball field remaining.

Master Planning efforts included an investigation of a variety of uses throughout the site including a retail shopping center in the ballfield area, a movie theatre, commercial office buildings throughout the site, and the use of the ballfield as a baseball field. These investigations were conducted with real estate and planning professionals and input from citizens. One citizen-submitted plan contained a fully-developed park in the common green. Other suggestions were made by citizens in the draft plan phase of the project in the fall of 2008. Each of these alternatives, though considered, was not depicted as alternative plans in specific site drawings. The considerations included conformance to the Comprehensive Plan and vision for the site, total square footage, construction costs, accessibility, visibility, rate of return, etc.

The ball field area was determined to be one of the few locations that could support new construction, yet remain flexible for a variety of uses. The planning effort also considered the Comprehensive Plan's call for a recreational amenity for the site and surrounding users and a connection to the Greenway Trail. New construction townhomes were determined to be the best development plan for the ball field area, and the creation of a common green area for the residents and surrounding users was determined to be the best compatible use associated with the residential component of the site. Factors in this decision also included

historic uses of the site, National Register components, economic considerations, accessibility, and community planning principles.

49. Request for meeting summaries from meetings with Supervisors Hyland and Herrity
The purpose of the Supervisor briefings was to inform Supervisors and their staff about the work to date and the plan to take the revised master plan to the public. Supervisors were not asked to endorse the plan and will be provided with a copy of all public meeting summaries from the outreach efforts. Meeting minutes were not taken at the Supervisor briefings.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9.30 p.m.